

THE
VANITY
OF
THOUGHTS
DISCOVERED:

WITH
THEIR DANGER
AND CVRE:

BY
THO: GOODWIN, B.D.

L O N D O N,
Printed by M. F. for R. Dawlman, and
L. Fawne, at the signe of the Brazen
Serpent in Pauls Church-yard, 1638.

~~Abigail~~ Abigail Chetwood's Book
Elizabeth Lowe wrote this with a
roughy Pen

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THE
VANITY
 OF
 THOUGHTS.

JEREM. 4.14.

*How long shall thy vaine
 thoughts lodge within
 thee?*

IN these words
 hee compares
 the heart unto
 some house of
 common resort, made as
 A 5 it

it were with many and large roomes to entertaine and lodge multitudes of Guests in; into which, before conversion, all the vaine, light, wanton, prophane, dissolute thoughts, that poste up and downe the World (as your thoughts doe) and runne riot all the day, have free, open accessse, the heart keeps open house to them, givesthem willing, cheerfull welcome, and entertainment; accompanies them, travels o're all the world for the daintiest pleasures to feed them with; *Lodgeth*, harbours them, and there they, like unruly Gallants, and roysters, *lodge*, and revell it day

day and night, and defile those roomes they lodge in, with their loathsome filth and vomits. *How long,* sayes the Lord, *shall they lodge therein? Whilst I* with my Spirit, my Sonne, and traine of graces, *stand at the doore and knock,* Rev. 3. 20. and cannot finde admittance; of all which filthinesse, &c. the Heart this house must be *washed; wash thy heart from wickednesse.* Washt, not swept onely of grosser evils (as *Matth. 12. 43. the house,* (the unclean spirit re-enters into) is said to bee swept of evils that lay loose and uppermost) but *washt,* and clensted of those defilements which sticke
more

more close, and are incorporated, and wrought in, into the Spirit. And 2. those *vaine* and unruly guests must bee turned out of doores, without any warning, they have staid there long enough; too long; *How long?* and the *time past may suffice*, as the Apostle speaks, they must lodge there no more. The house, the soule is not in conversion to bee puld downe, but onely these guests turned out; and though kept out they cannot be, they will still enter whilst wee are in these houses of clay, yet lodge they must not: if thoughts of anger and revenge come in, in the morning or day

day time, they must bee
turned out e're night, *Let
not the Sunne goe downe up-
on your wrath, Ephes. 4. 26.*

For so you may come to
lodge yet a worser guest
in your heart with them :

Give not place to the Devil,
(for it followes) who will
bring seven worse with him.

If uncleane thoughts offer
to come to bed to thee,
when thou liest downe, let
them not lodge with thee.

To conclude, it is not
what thoughts are in your
hearts, and passe through
them, as what lodging
they have, that doth diffe-
rence your repentance:
many good thoughts and
motions may passe, as
Strangers thorow a bad
mans

mans heart; and so likewise multitudes of vaine thoughts may make a thorow-fare of a beleevers heart, and disturbe him in good duties, by knockings and interruptions, and breakings in upon the heart of a good man; but still they lodge not there; are not fostered, harboured.

My scope in our ordinary course is, to discover the wickednesse and vanitie of the heart by nature: in the heart we are yet but in the upper parts of it, the understanding, and the defilements thereof, which are to bee washt out of it, and the next defilement, which in my broken order

der I meane to handle, is that which is here specified, *the vanity of your thoughts*: for the discovery sake of which onely, I chose this Text, as my ground; *That* is it, therefore, which I will chiefly insist upon. A *subject* which, I confesse, would prove of all else the vastest. To make an exact particular discovery of the vanities in our thoughts, to travell over the whole Creation, and to take a survey, and give an account of all that vanity abounds in all the creatures, was (as you know) the taske of the wisest of men, *Solomon*; the flowre of his studies
and

and labours : But the *vanitie of our thoughts*, are as multiplied much in us; this *little world* affoordes more varieties of vanities, than the Great. Our thoughts made the *creatures subject to vanitie*, *Rom. 8. 20.* therfore themselves are subject to vanity much more. In handling of them I will shew you, 1. What is meant by *Thoughts*. 2. *What by vanity*. 3. *That our thoughts are vaine*. 4. Wherein that vanity doth consist, both in the generall, and some particulars.

First, what is *meant by thoughts*, especially as they are the intended subject of this discourse, which

which in so vast an argument I must necessarily set limits unto: 1. By *thoughts*, the Scriptures do comprehend all the *internall* acts of the minde of man, of what faculty soever, all those reasonings, consultations, purposes, resolutions, intents, ends, desires, and cares of the minde of man, as opposed to our *external* words and actions, so *Isay* 66. 18. All acts are divided into those two, *I know their workes and their thoughts*: what is transacted within the minde, is called the *thoughts*; what thereof do manifest themselves, and breake out in actions, are called *workes*.

And

And so Genes. 6. 5. Every imagination of the thoughts, (*omne figmentum*) all the creatures the minde frames within it selfe, purposes, desires, &c. (as it is noted in the margin) *are evill*; where by thoughts are understood all that comes within the minde, (as *Ezech. 11. 5.* the phrase is) and so indeed we vulgarly use it, and understand it, so *To remember* a man, is, to *thinke of him*, Gen. 40. 14. to have *purposed* a thing, we say, *I thought to doe it.* To take care about a businesse, is to *take thought*, 1 Sam. 9. 5. And the reason, why all may thus bee called *the thoughts*, is, because indeed

deed, all affections, desires, purposes, are stirred up by thoughts, bred, fomented, and nourished by them: no one thought passeth, but it stirreth some affection of feare, joy, care, grief, &c. No, although they are thus *largely* taken here, yet I intend not to handle the *vanity* of them in so large a sense at present: I must confine my selfe, as strictly as may be, to the vanity of that, which is more properly called the *thinking, meditating, considering power of man*, which is in his understanding or spirit, that being the subject I have in hand: *Thoughts* not being in this sense opposed only

ly to *your workes*, but unto purposes and intents, so *Hebr. 4. 12.* as the *soule* and *spirit*, so thoughts and intents seeme to bee opposed. And *Iob 20. 2, 3.* *Thoughts* are appropriated to the *Spirit of understanding*. And againe yet more strictly, for in the understanding I meane not to speake of, generally, all thoughts therein, neither, as not of the *reasonings* or *deliberations* in our actions: but those *musings* onely in the *Speculative* part.

And so, I can no otherwise expresse them to you, than thus. Those same first, more *simple conceits*, *apprehensions* that arise;

arise; those *fancies, meditations*, which the understanding by the *helpe of fancy frames within it selfe of things*; those whereon your mindes ponder and pore, and muse upon things, these I meane by *thoughts*, I meane those *talkings* of our mindes with the things wee know, as the Scripture calls it, *Prov. 6. 22.* those same parleys, enterviews, chattings, the minde hath with the things let into it, with the things wee feare, with the things wee love. For all these things our mindes make their companions, and our thoughts hold them discourse, and have a thousand conceits about

about them ; this I meane by *thoughts*. For besides that *reasoning* power, *deliberating* power, whereby wee aske our selves continually, *what shall wee doe ?* and whereby wee reason and discusse things, which is a more inward closet, the Cabinet and privie councill of the heart, there is a more outward lodging, that presence chamber, which entertaines all commers, which is the *thinking, meditating, musing* power in man, which suggesteth matter for deliberations, and consultations, and reasonings, which holds the *objects* till we view them, which entertaineth all that come to
speake

speake with any of our affections.

2. I adde, which *the minde frames within it self*, so the Scripture exprefeth their originall to us, and their maner of rifing, *Prov. 6. 14. Frowardnesse is in his heart, fabricatur, hee forgeth mischief*, as a Smith doth Iron, hammers it out: and the thoughts are the materials of this frowardnesse in us; upon all the things which are presented to us, the minde begets some thoughts, imaginations on them; and as *lusts*, so *thoughts* are conceived, *James 1. Ifay 59. 4. They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquitie, and hatch*

hatch Cockatrice egges, and weave Spiders webbes. And verse 7. hee instanceth in thoughts of iniquity, because our thoughts are spunne out of our owne hearts, are egges of our owne laying, though the things presented to us bee from without.

And this I adde to sever them from such *thoughts* as are *injected*, and cast in, onely from without. which are children of anothers begetting, and often laid out of doores: such as are blasphemous thoughts cast in *by Satan*, wherein if the soule bee meereley passive, (as the word *Buffeting* implies, *2 Cor. 12. 7.*) they are none of

of your thoughts, but his; wherein a man is but as one in a roome with another, where he heares another sweare and curse, but cannot get out from him; such thoughts, if they be onely *from without*, defile not a man. For *nothing* defiles a man, but *what comes from within*, *Matth.* 15. 18, 19. or which the heart hath begotten upon it by the devil, as thoughts of uncleannes, &c. Wherein though he be the father, yet the heart is the mother and wombe; and therefore accordingly they affect the heart, as naturall children doe, and by that wee may distinguish them from the other, namely,

B

when

when we have a soft heart,
an inward love unto them,
so that our hearts doe kisse
the childe, then they are
our *thoughts*, or else when
the heart broods upon
these egges, then they are
our *thoughts*, though they
come from without.

Though this is to bee
added, that even those
thoughts, wherein the
soule is passive, and which
Satan casts in, which wee
do no wayes owne, where-
in hee *ravisheth* the heart,
rather than *begets* them
on us, (if there bee not any
consent to them in us,
then it is but a *Rape*, as in
law it is not) I yeeld
those thoughts are punish-
ments often of neglect of
our

our thoughts, and of our suffering them to wander ; as *Dinah*, because she went cunningly out, *to view the Daughters of the land*, was taken and ravish't, though against her will : yet it was a punishment of her curiosity : or else they are the punishment of the neglect of good motions of the spirit ; which resisting, *we thereby grieve him*, and so he deales with us, as wee with our children, suffers us to bee scared with bug-beares, and to bee grieved by *Satan*, that wee may learne what it is to neglect him, and harboure vanity. Lastly , I adde, which the minde, *in and by it selfe*, or by the helpe of

fancy, thus begets and entertaines, because there are no thoughts or likenesses of things at any time in our fancies, but at the same time they are in the understanding also reflected unto it: As when two Looking-glasses are placed opposite and nigh each to other, looke what species appeares in the one, doe also in the other.

Secondly, let us see what *vanity* is, take it in all the acceptations of it; It is true of our *thoughts* that they are *vaine*.

1. It is taken for *unprofitableness*. So *Eccles. 1. 2, 3.* *All is vanitie*, because there is no profit in them
under

*under the Sunne, such are our thoughts by nature, the wisest of them will not stand us in any stead in time of need, in time of temptati-
on, distresse of consci-
ence, day of death or
Judgement, 1 Corin. 2.6.*

*All the wisdom of the
wise comes to nought, Pro.
10.20. The heart of the
wicked is little worth, not
a penny for them all,
whereas the thoughts of a
godly man are his trea-
sure: Out of the good trea-
sure of his heart, hee brings
them forth. He mints them,
and they are laid up as his
riches. Psal. 138. 17. How
pretious are they? he there
speakes of our thoughts of
B 3 God,*

God, as the object of them
thy thoughts, that is, (of
thee) are precious.

2. *Vanitie* is taken for
lightnesse. *Lighter than
vanity* is a phrase used,
Psal. 62. 9. and whom is it
spoken of? of men, and if
any thing in them be *ligh-*
ter than other, it is their
thoughts which swim in
the uppermost parts, float
at the top, is as the scum
of the heart ; when all the
best and wisest, and dee-
pest, and solideest *thoughts*
in *Balthazar* a Prince,
were weighed, they were
found too light, *Dan.* 5. 17.

3. *Vanity* is put for fol-
ly. So *Prov.* 12. 11. *Vaine
men*, is made all one with
men void of understand-
ing.

ding. Such are our thoughts among other evils which are said to come out of the heart, Mark. 7. 22. *αἰσχρονομία* is reckoned as one, foolishnesse, that is, thoughts that are such as mad men have, and fooles, nothing to the purpose, of which there can be made no use, which a man knowes not whence they should come, nor whither they would, without dependance.

4. It is put for Inconstancy, and frailty, therefore vanity and a shadow are made *Synonomaes*, Psal. 144. 4. such are our thoughts, flitting and perishing, as bubbles, Ps. 146. 4. All their thoughts perish.

B 4

Lastly,

Lastly, they are *vaine*, that is, indeed, *wicked* and *sinfull*; *vanity* in the Text here, is yoaked with *wickedness*: and *vaine men*, and *sonnes of Belial* are all one, 2 Chron. 13. 17. And such are our thoughts by nature: Prov. 24. 9. *The thought of foolishnesse is sinne*. And therefore a man is to bee humbled for a *proud thought*, Prov. 30. 32. For so *laying band* on the mouth is taken, as Job 39. 37. for being *wile in a mans owne eyes*.

And because this is the sense I chiefly must insist on, in handling the *vanity of the thoughts*, and also men usually thinke that *thoughts are free*; I will there.

therefore prove this to you, which is the onely Doctrine raised, that *Thoughts are sinnes.*

1. The *Law* judgeth them, *Hebr. 4. 12. rebukes a man* for them, *1 Cor. 14. 25.* and therefore they are transgressions of the Law: and so also did Christ rebuke the Pharisees for *their ill thoughts, Mat. 9. 4.* which argues the excellency of the Law, that reacheth thoughts.

2. Because they are *Capable of pardon*, and must be pardoned, or wee cannot be saved, *Acts 8. 22.* which argues the multitudes of *Gods compassions*, seeing thoughts are so infinite.

3. They are to bee *repented of*, yea repentance is expressed, as to begin at them. So *Esay 55.7. Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts*; and a man is never truely and throughly wrought on, (as *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.*) *till every thought be brought into obedience*; which argues that they are naturally rebellious, and contrary to grace. And this also argueth the *Power of grace*, which is able to *rule* and to *subdue* so great an Army as our thoughts are, and command them all, as one day it will doe, when wee are perfectly holy.

4. *They defile the man*: which nothing defiles but sinne,

sinne, *Matt. 15. 15, 16, 17.*
Out of the heart proceed e-
vill thoughts, these defile
the man.

5. They are an abomi-
 nation to the Lord, who
 hates nothing but sinne,
 and whose pure eyes can en-
 dure to behold no iniquity,
Prov. 15. 16. as good Me-
 ditations are acceptable,
Psal. 25. ult. so, by the rule
 of contrary, bad are abo-
 minable.

6. They hinder all good
 wee should doe, and spoile
 our best performances.
 Vaine thoughts draw the
 heart away in them, that
 when a man should draw
 nigh to God, his Heart, by
 reason of his thoughts, is
farre off from him, Esay

29. 16. *A mans heart goes after his covetousnesse,* when hee should heare, as the Prophet speakes, because his thoughts thus run. Now nothing else but sinne could separate, and what doth estrange us from God, is sinne, and enmity to him.

7. Our thoughts are the *first motioners of all the evil in us.* For they make the motion, and also bring the heart and object together; are panders to our lusts, hold up the object, till the heart hath plaid the adulterer with it, and committed folly, so in speculative uncleannesse, & in other lusts, they hold up the images of those gods,

gods they create, which the heart falls downe and worships; they present credit, riches, beauty, till the heart hath worshipt them, and this when the things themselves are absent.

To come now to those *Particulars* wherein this *vanity* of the *thinking*, meditating power of the minde consists.

First, I will discover it in regard of *thinking what is good*, how unable and loth, &c. it is to good thoughts; and secondly, in regard of the readinesse of it to think of *evill and vaine things*.

For the first, first in a want of ability ordinarily,

and naturally to raise and
ex-

extract holy and usefull considerations & thoughts from all ordinary occurrences, and occasions; which the minde, so farre as it is sanctified, is apt unto. A heart sanctified, and in whose affections true grace is enkindled, out of all Gods dealings with him, out of the things he sees and heares, out of all the objects are put into the thoughts he distilleth holy, and sweet, and usefull meditations: and it naturally doth it, and ordinarily doth it, so farre as it is sanctified. So our Saviour Christ, all speeches of others which hee heard, all accidents and occurrences did still raise and occasion
in

in him heavenly meditations, as wee may see throughout the whole Gospels: when he came by a well, hee speakes of the *Water of life*, *Iohn 4*, &c. Many instances might be given; *He* in his thoughts translated the book of the creatures, into the booke of grace, and so did *Adams* heart in innocency: his *Philosophy* might be truely termed *Divinity*, because hee saw God in all; all raised up his heart to thankfulness and praise: So now in like manner our mindes, so farre as they are sanctified, will doe. As the *Philosophers-stone* turnes all Metals into Gold; As the Bee sucks honey out of

of every flower, and a good stomack sucks out some sweet and wholsome nourishment out of what it takes unto it selfe: so doth a holy heart, so farre as sanctified, convert and digest all into spiritual usefull thoughts; this you may see, *Psalme 107. ult.* *That Psalme* gives many instances of Gods providence, and wonderfull works which hee doth for the *sonnes of men*; as deliverances by Sea, where men see his wonders: deliverance to Captives, &c. and still the foot of the Song is, *Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for the wonderfull workes hee doth for the sonnes*

sonnes of men. Now after all these instances, hee concludes, that though others passe over such occurrences with ordinarie slight thoughts, yet sayes hee, *The righteous shall see it, and rejoyce*: that is, extract comfortable thoughts out of all, which shall be matter of joy, and *who so is wise will observe those things*, that is, makes holy observations out of all these, and out of a principle of wisdom hee understands Gods goodness in all, and so his heart is raised to thoughts of praise, and thankfulness, and obedience. Now compare with this the 92. *Psalme* made for the Sabbath

bath (when in imitation of God, who that day viewed his works, wee are, on our *Lords day*, still to raise holy praisefull thoughts out of them to his glory, which hee that penned that *Psalme* then did, *vers. 1. and 2. and) ver. 5. How great are thy workes, &c!* A brutish man knowes not, nor will a foole understand this: that is, hee being a beast, and having no sanctified principle of wisdom in him, lookes no further than a beast into all the works of God, and occurrences of things; lookes on all blessings as things provided for mans delight by God: but hee extracts seldome holy spirituall

rituall and usefull thoughts out of all, he wants the art of doing it.

If injuries be offered us by others, what doe our thoughts distill out of those wrongs, but thoughts of revenge? we meditate how to requite it againe. But see how naturally *Dauids* mind distills other thoughts of *Shemeis* cursing, 2 Sam. 16. 11. *God hath bidden him*, and it may prove a good signe of Gods favor. *God may requite good for it.* When we see judgements befall others, severe thoughts of censure our mindes are apt to raise against our brother, as *Iobs* friends did. But a godly man

man whose minde is much sanctified, raieth other thoughts out of it, *Prov.* 21. 22. *Wisely considers, &c.*

So when outward mercies befall us, the next thoughts wee are apt to have, is to project ease by our wealth, thou *hast goods for many yeares*: and when judgements befall us, wee are apt to be fill'd with thoughts of complaint, and feares, and cares how to winde out againe. But what were the first thoughts *Iob* had, upon the newes of the losse of all: *God hath given, and the Lord hath taken, blessed be the Lord for all.*

Such thoughts as these
(which

(which all opportunities hint unto) a good heart is apprehensive of, and doth naturally raise for its owne use. So farre *Barren as our thoughts are, so farre vaine.*

Secondly, the *vanitie*, and *sinfulness* of the minde appeares in a *loathnesse* to *entertaine holy thoughts*, to begin to set it selfe to thinke of God, and the things belonging unto our peace; even as loath they are to this as Schoole-boyes are to goe to their Books, or to busie their mindes about their lessons, their heads being full of play; so loath are our mindes to enter into serious considerations, in-
to

to sad solemne thoughts of God, or death, &c. Men are as loath to thinke of *death*, as theeves of the *execution*; or to thinke of *God*, as they are of their Judge. So to goe over their owne actions, in a review of them, and read the blurd writing of their hearts, and to *commune with them*, at night in the end of the day, (as *David* did, *Psalme*. 119.59.) men are as loath to doe this, as Schoole-boyes are to perse their lessons, and the false Latins they have made, *Iob* 21. *Depart from us* (say they in *Iob*) unto God, from their thoughts they meant it, for it follows, *we desire not the*

the knowledge of thy wayes.

They would not thinke of him, or know them by their good wills; and therefore our mindes, like a bad stomack, are nauseated with the very scent of good things, and soone casts them up againe,

Rom. 1. 28. They like not to retaine the knowledge of God: let us goe and try to wind up our soules, at any time, to holy meditations, to thinke of what we have heard, or what wee have done, or what is our duty to doe, and wee shall finde our minds, like the peggs of an Instrument, slip betweene our fingers, as we are a winding them up, and to fall downe suddenly againe,

gaine, ere we are aware of it: yea you shall finde, that your mindes will labour to shun what may occasion such thoughts; even as men goe out of the way, when they see they must meet with one they are loath to speake withall; yea men dare not be alone, for feare such thoughts should returne upon them. The best shall finde a gladnesse, for an excuse, by other occasions to knocke off their thoughts from what is good: whereas in thinking of vaine earthly things, we thinke the time passeth too fast, clocks strike too soone, houres passe away ere wee are aware of it.

Third-

Thirdly, the *vanity* and
sinfulnesse of the minde
appeares in the godly,
that though they enter-
taine good thoughts, yet
the minde is not, will not
bee *long intent* on them.

Some things there are,
which wee are, and can be
intent upon, and accor-
dingly dwell long upon
them, and therefore in
Iob 17. 11. The thoughts
are called the *possessions of*
the heart, (so 'tis in the o-
riginall, and noted in the
margin) such thoughts as
are pleasing, the heart
dwells on them; yea so
intent are wee often, that
they hinder our sleepe: as
'tis said of wicked men,
They cannot sleepe for mul-
C *titude*

itude of thoughts, Eccles.
5.12. So, to devise froward
things, Solomon sayes,
Prov. 16. 30. That a man
shuts his eyes, that is, is ex-
ceeding attentive, poreth
upon his plots; for so a
man doth use to do, to shut
his eyes when hee would
be intent, and therefore it
is so expressed. But now
let the minde be occupied
and busied about good
things, and things belong-
ing to our peace, how un-
steady is it? which things
should yet draw out the
intention of the minde:
For the more excellent
the object is, the stronger
our intention should bee.
God is the most glorious
object our mindes can fa-
sten

sten on, the most alluring.
The thought of whom
therefore should swallow
up all other, as not wor-
thy to bee seene the same
day with him: But I ap-
peale to all your experi-
ences, if your thoughts of
him be not most unsteady,
and are, (that I may so
compare it) as when wee
looke upon a Starre tho-
row an Optique glasse,
held with a palsie shaking
hand: It is long ere wee
can bring our mindes to
have ken of him, to place
our eyes upon him, and
when wee have, how doe
our hands shake, and so
loose sight ever and anon?
So whilst wee are in never
so serious talke with him,

when all things else should stand without, and not dare to offer entrance, till wee have done with him, yet how many chinkes are there in the heart, at which other thoughts come in: and our minds leave God, and follow them, and goe *after our covetousnesse*, our credit, &c. as the Prophets phrase is, *Ezech. 33.* So when wee are hearing the Word, how do our minds ever and anon runne out of the Church, and come againe, and so doe not heare halfe that is said: So when wee are at our callings, which God bids us to bee conversant about with all our might, *Eccles. 9. 10.* yet our minds like

like idle truants, or negligent servants, though sent about never so serious a businesse, yet goe out of the way to see any sport, runne after the Hares that crosse the way, follow after Butter-flies that buzze about us.

And so when wee come to pray, Christ bids *watch to prayer*, *Mark. 13.33.* that is, as if wee were at every dore to place a guard that none come in and disturbe and knock us off. But how oft doth the heart nod, and fall asleepe, and runne into another world, as men in dreames doe? Yea so naturall are distractions to us, when wee are busied about holy duties, that as

excrements come from men, when very weak and sicke, ere they are aware of it; so doe worldly thoughts from us, and we are carried out of that streame of good our mind was running in, into some by-creek ere we are aware of it.

Fourthly, the *vanity* of the minde appeares, in regard of *good* things, that if it doth thinke of them, yet it doth it *unseasonably*. It is with your thoughts as with your speeches, their goodness lies in their placing and order, *Prov. 25. 11. If fitly spoken, they are as Apples of Gold in pictures of silver.* And as a man is to bring forth actions,

actions, so thoughts in *due season*; as those *fruits*, so these *buds* should come out in *season*, *Psalms*. i. Now the vanity of the minde appears in thinking of some good things, sometimes unseasonably; when you are praying, you should not onely have no worldly thoughts come in, but no other than praying thoughts. But then haply some notions of, or for a Sermon will come readily in: so in hearing, a man shall often have good thoughts that are heterogeneous to the thing in hand; So when a man is falling downe to prayer, look what thing a man had forgotten, when it

should have beene thought of, will then come in, or what will affect a man much comes in to divert him. This *misplacing* of *thoughts* (suppose they bee good) is yet from a vanity of the minde; did those thoughts come at another time, they should be welcome: we finde our minds ready to spend thoughts about any thing, rather than what God at present calls unto. When we goe to a Sermon, we finde we could then spend our thoughts more willingly about reading; or happily searching our hearts; unto which at another time, when called to it, wee should be most unwilling to

to. We could bee content to run wild over the fields of meditations and miscellaneous thoughts, though about good, rather than to bee tied to that taske, and kept in one set path.

In *Adam* and *Christ* no thought was misplaced, but though they were as *many* as the *Starres*, yet they marched in their *courses*, and kept their ranks. But ours as *Meteors*, dance up and downe in us. And this *disorder* is a *vanity* and *sinne*, bee the thought materially never so good. Not every one that hath the best part must therefore first step up the Stage to Act, but take his right cue. In

Printing, let the letters bee never so faire, yet if not placed in their order, and rightly compased, they marre the sense. Souldiers upon no termes should breake their ranks: so nor should our thoughts, *Prov. 16. 3.* There is a promise to a *Righteous man*, that (as some reade it) *his thoughts shall be ordered.*

And so much for the first part, *The privative sinfulnessse in our thoughts, in respect of what is good.*

Now secondly, I proceed to discover that *positive vanity*, which appeareth in our thoughts; in regard of *what is evill.* And here it is not to bee expected, nor indeed can
it

it bee performed by any man, to reckon up the severall particularities of all those vaine thoughts which run through mans heart; I will insist onely on some more generall discoveries, to which particulars may be reduced, for a taste of the rest.

First, the *vanitie* of them discovers it selfe, in that which Christ calls, *Mark. 7. 22. uenerum foolishness*: that is, such thoughts as mad men have, and fooles; which *foolishnesse* is seene, both in that unsetled wantonnesse and *unstayednesse* of the minde in thinking, that like quick-silver it cannot fixe, but as *Solomon* sayes, *Prov.*

17.24. *A fooles eyes are in the ends of the earth,* are garish, and runne up and downe from one end of the earth to the other, shooting and streaming, as those Meteors you see sometimes in the ayre. And though indeed the minde of man is nimble and able thus to run from one end of the earth to another, (which is its strength and excellency) yet God would not have this strength and nimbleness, and metall-spirit in curvetting and tumbling, (as I may call it) but in steady directing all our thoughts straight on to his glory, our owne salvation, and the good of others;

thers; he gave it this nimbleness to turne away from evill, and the first appearance of it. As we are to walke in Gods wayes hee calls us to, so every thought, as well as every action is a step: and therefore ought to bee steady, *Make straight steps to your feete,* sayes the Apostle, *Hebrews 12. 13.* turning not to the right hand, nor to the left, untill we come to the journeys end of that businesse wee are to think of. But our thoughts, at best, are as wanton Spaniels, who though indeed they goe with, and accompany their Master, and come to their journeys end with him in the end, yet

yet doe runne after every Bird, and wildly pursue every flock of sheepe they see. This unsteadinesse, it ariseth from the like curse on the minde of *Man*, as was on *Caine*, that it being driven from the presence of the Lord, it proves a vagabond, and so mens eyes are in the ends of the earth.

This foolishnesse or *uopacum* is also seene in that *Independence* in our thoughts; they hanging oft together as ropes of sand; this wee see more evidently in dreames: And not onely then, but when awake also, and *that*, when we would set our selves to be most serious, how doe our thoughts jangle and ring

ring back-ward: and as wanton Boyes, when they take pens in their hands, scribble broken words that have no dependence. Thus doe our thoughts: and if you would but looke over the copies thereof, which you write continually, you would finde as much non-sense in your thoughts, as you find in mad mens speeches. This madnesse and distemper is in the minde since the fall (though it appeares not in our words, because wee are wiser) that if notes were taken of our thoughts, we should finde thoughts so vagrant, that wee know not how they come in, nor whence they came,

came, nor whither they would. But as God doth *all things* in *weight*, *number*, and *measure*, so doth his Image in us, so farre as it is renewed. And, by reason of these two, the *folly*, *unsettlednesse*, and *independence* of our thoughts, wee bring our thoughts often to no issue, to no perfection, but wander away our time in *thinking* (as you use to say) *of nothing*; and as *Seneca* sayes of mens *lives*, as of Ships that are tost up and downe at Sea, it may bee said they have beene *tossed much*, but *sailed nothing*; The like in this respect may bee said of the thoughts: Or as when
men

men make imperfect dashes, and write non-sense, *They are said to scribble, they doe not write*: So, in these follies and independencies, wee wilder and *lose our selves, wee doe not thinke.*

But 2. on the contrary if any *strong lust*, or violent passion be up, then our thoughts are *too fixed and intent*, and run in so farre into such sinfull objects, that they cannot bee puld out againe, or any way diverted or taken off: which is another vanity. For our thoughts and our understanding part was ordained to moderate, allay, and coole, and take off our passions, when they are a
pla-

playing over, to rule and governe them. But now our thoughts are themselves subjected to our affections, and like fuell put under them, doe but make them boile the more. And although our thoughts do first stirre up our feares, joyes, desires, &c. yet these being stirred up once, chaine, and fixe, and hold our thoughts to those objects, so as wee cannot loosen them again. Therefore sayes Christ to his Disciples, *Why are you troubled, and why doe thoughts arise in your hearts*: For perturbations in the affections cause thoughts like fumes and vapours to ascend. Thus
if

if a *passion of feare* bee up,
how doth it conjure up
multitudes of ghostly
thoughts which wee can-
not conjure downe againe,
nor hide our eyes from?
But which haunt us, and
follow us up and downe,
where ever wee goe, so as
a man runnes away pursu-
ed by his owne thoughts,
the heart then meditates on
terroure: As *Isay 33. 18.* So
when sorrow is up, how
doth it make us study the
crosse that lights upon us?
which to forget, would
be an ease unto the minde.
But a mans passions makes
his thoughts to con it, and
to say it by heart, over
and over againe, as if it
would not have us forget
it.

it. So when *love* and *desire* is up, bee the thing what it will, wee are taken with, as preferment, credit, beauty, riches, it sets our thoughts aworke to view the thing all over, from top to toe (as wee say) to observe every part and circumstance, that doth make it amiable unto us : as if a picture were to bee drawn of it. So when *joy* is up, wee view the thing we reioice in, and reade it over and over, as wee doe a Booke wee like, and wee marke every rittle, wee are punctuall in it ; yea so inordinate are wee herein, as often we cannot sleepe for thinking on them. *Eccles.* 5. 12. *Abundance of riches will*

will not suffer him to sleepe, for the multitude of thoughts in his head, speaking of a man who is covetous; how doe thoughts trouble the Belshazzers and Nebuchadonezers of the world? Dan. 4. 19. so Proverbs 4. 16. They sleepe not unlesse they have done mischief; if their desires remaine unsatisfied, they doe disturbe their thoughts, like froward children by their crying; so as, often, these which men count free (as the most doe thoughts) doe prove the greatest bondage and torment in the earth unto them, and doe hinder sleepe, the nurse of nature, eate out, and live upon

upon the heart that bred them, weary the spirits, that when a man shall say (as *Iob 7. 13.*) *My bed shall comfort mee*, by putting a parenthesis to his thoughts, and sad discourses, which hee hath when awake, yet then they haunt a man; and as *vers. 14. terrifie him.* A man cannot lay them aside as he doth his cloake: and when men die they will follow them to hell, and torment them worse there; your thoughts are one of the greatest executioners there, even the *worm that dies not.*

Thirdly, the *vanity* of the minde appears in *curiosity*, a longing and itching

ing to bee fed with, and to know (and then delighting to thinke of) things that do not at all concerne us. Take an experiment of this in Schollers (whose chiefe worke lies in this shop) how many precious thoughts are spent this way: as in curiosity of knowledge, as appears by those the Apostle often rebukes, that affect, as *1 Tim. 6. 4, 20. oppositions of science falsely so called curiosities of knowledge of things they have not seene.* So *Coloss. 2.* and *1 Tim. 4. 7.* hee calls such issues of mens braines, they dote on, *old wives fables*: because as fables please old wives, so doe these

these their mindes, and of that itch they have in them, even as women with child, in their longings, content not themselves with what the place affords, or the season, with what may be had; but often long after some unheard of rarity, far fetcht, or, it may bee, not at all to be had: Thus men not contenting themselves with the wonders of God discovered in the depth of his Word and Workes, they will launch into another Sea, and world of their owne making, and there they saile with pleasure, as many of the Schoole-men did in some of their speculations,
spen-

spending their pretious wits in framing curious webs out of their owne bowels.

Take another instance also in others, who have leisure and parts to reade much, they should ballast their hearts with the Word, and take in those more pretious words of wisdome and sound knowledge to profit themselves and others, and to build up their owne soules, and whereby they may bee enabled to serve their Countrey: but now what doe their curious fancies carry them unto, to bee versed in, but Play-books, jeering Pasquils, Roman-ses, fained staves, which

D

are

are the curious needle-
worke of idle braines, so
as they load their heads
with *Apes and Peacocks*
feathers, in stead of pearles
and pretious stones; so as
a man may say as *Solomon*
Prov. 15. 14. *The heart of*
him that hath understand-
ing seeketh knowledge, but
the mouth of fooles feeds on
foolishnesse. Foolish dis-
courses please their eares
and eyes to reade: all these
being but purveiors (as it
were) for food, for the
thoughts, like *Camelions*
men live on ayre and
winde.

To leave them, how
doe others put of meere
curiosity to know and
please their thoughts, li-
sten

ften after all the news that
flies up and downe the
world, scum all the froth
that floats in foolish mens
mouths, and please them-
selves onely with talking,
thinking, and hearing
of it.

I do not condemne all
herein: some their ends
are good, and they can
make use of it, and doe as
Nehemiab did, who inquir-
ed how things went at
Ierusalem, to rejoyce with
Gods people, and mourne
with them, and pray for
them, and to know how
to fashion their prayers
accordingly. But I con-
demne that curious itch
that is in men, when it is
done, but meerly to please
D 2 their

their fancies, which is much delighted with new things, though they concerne us not; such the *Athenians* were, *Acts* 17.

21. How doe some men long all the weeke, till they heare events and issues, and make it a great part of the happinesse of their lives, to study the state more than their own hearts, and affaires of their callings: who take actions of State as their text to study the meaning of, and to preach on where-ever they come. I speake of those that yet lay not to heart the miseries of the Church of Christ, nor helpe them with their prayers, if at any
time

time they happen.

The like curiosity is seene in many, in desiring to know the secrets of other men, which yet would doe them no good to know, and who doe study mens actions and ends, not to reforme, or doe good to them, but to know them, and think and muse thereof, when alone, with pleasure; this is curiosity, and properly a vanity of the thinking power, which it mainly pleaseth; and is indeed a great sin, when much of mens most pleasing thoughts are spent on things concerne them not. For the things we ought to know, and which doe concerne

us, are enough to take up all our thoughts alone, neither shall wee have any to spare: and thoughts are pretious things, the immediate fruits and buds of an immortall nature; and God hath given us power to coyne them, to lay them out in things concerne our owne good, and of our neighbours, and his owne glory; and thus not to spend them is the greatest waste in the world; examine what Come you put in to grind, for God ought to have toll of all. *Prover. 24. 8.* Hee that deviseth evill shall be called a mischievous person, not alwayes hee that doth a mischievous action,

on, but that deviseth it: and *verse 9.* he aggravates it, *à minori*, for every thought is sinne, then a combination and conspiracy of wicked thoughts is much more.

But 4. there is a worse vanity than this, and that is that intimated *Rom. 13. ult.* *Taking thought to fulfill the lusts of the flesh,* ~~rebus in mundis~~ [*To make projects for it.*] For thoughts are the Caterers for our lusts, and lay in all their provision, they are they that looke out where the best markets are, the best opportunities for sinning in any kind, the best bargaines for credit, for preferment, for riches, &c.

D 4

For

For example, would a man rise? his thoughts study the art of it, men frame their owne ladder to climbe withall, invent wayes how to doe it, though often it proves as to *Haman* their owne Gallows. Would they bee rich? what doe they study? even all cheats and tricks on the Cards, (as I may so speake) that is, all the cunning tricks of the world, all the wayes of oppressing, defrauding, and going beyond their brethren, so to pack things in all their dealings, that they themselves shall bee the winners, and those that deale with them, the losers, *Isay* 32. 7. It is said,

said, that the Instruments of the churlish are evill, and hee deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poore: would a man undermine his opposite, as one that stands in his light, and who hinder his credit? he'll digge and fall a pioning, with his thoughts, his engines, in the night, digge a pit, as the *Scripture phrase is*, and dig deepe to hide his counsell, to blow him up in the end, and so as hee shall not know who hurt him; and this is worse than all the former, this studied artificiall villanie. The more devising there is in sinne, the worse: therefore the fact about *Vriah*, not so much that of *Bathsheba*,

is objected against David, because hee used art in it; hee tooke thought for it, but in the matter of Bathsheba, thoughts tooke him.

Fiftly, the fifth is the *representing* or acting over *sinnes*, in our thoughts and imaginations, personating those pleasures by imagination, which at present wee enjoy not really, faining and imagining our selves to act those *sinfull* practises wee have not opportunity outwardly to performe: *speculative wickednesse* Divines doe call it, which to be in the power of imagination to doe, is evident to you by your dreames; when

when fancy playes its part
most, and to allude to
what the Prophet sayes,
makes us beleewe wee eat
*when wee are an hungry, to
drinke when our soules are
thirsty. Isay 29. 8.* But I
meane not to speake of the
power and corruption of
it, as in our dreames: it
were well if, as the Apo-
stle speakes of *Drunken-
nesse*, that this speculative
wickednesse were *onely
in the night.* But corrupt
and distempered affecti-
ons doe cast men into such
dreames in the day, and
when they are awake,
there are then (to borrow
the Apostles expression)
filthy dreames, Jude 8.
that defile the flesh, even
when

when awake: when, their lusts wanting worke, their fancie erects to them a stage, and they set their imaginations and thoughts a worke to entertaine their filthy and impure desires, with shewes and playes of their owne making, and so *reason* and the intention of their mindes, sit as spectatours all the while to view with pleasure, till their thoughts inwardly act over their owne uncleane desires, ambitious projects, or what ever else they have a minde unto.

So *vaine* and empty is the heart of man become, so *impatient* are our desires and lusts of interruption in their pleasures, so fin-
full

full and corrupt.

First, vaine and empty it appeares to bee in this; for take all the pleasures of sinne, when they are never so fully, solidly, really, and substantially enjoyed, they are but shadows, a meere outside and figure, as the Apostle calls the world. It is opinion of imagination that casts that varnish of goodnesse on them, which is not truly in them. So *Felix* and *Bernices* pompe is termed *πλεγματισία*; but now this speculative enjoying of them onely in imagination, (which many mens hearts take so much pleasure in,) the pleasing our selves in the bare thoughts

thoughts and imaginati-
ons of them, this is but a
shadow of these shadows,
that the soul should *ixion*-
like embrace and commit
adultery with clouds on-
ly; this is a *vanitie* be-
yond all other vanities,
that maketh us vainer than
other creatures, who,
though *subject to vanity*,
yet not to such as this.

Secondly, it argues our
desires to be impatient, to
bee detained from, or in-
terrupted of their plea-
sures. When the soule
shall bee found so greedy,
that when the heart is de-
barred or sequestred from
those things it desires, and
wants meanes or opportu-
nities to act its lusts, as not
being

being to stay, it will at least enjoy them in imagination, and in the *interim*, set fancie to entertaine the minde with empty pictures of them drawne in its owne thoughts.

3. Thus they appeare also to bee exceeding sinfull and corrupt; an *outward* act of sinne, it is but as an act of *whoredome* with the creature, when *really* enjoyed: But this is *Incest*, when we defile our soules and spirits with these imaginations and likenesses which are begotten in our own fancies, being the children of our owne hearts.

And yet (my brethren)
such speculative enjoying
of

of pleasures, and acting o-
ver of sinnes the minde of
man is full of, as will ap-
peare in many particu-
lars.

First, looke what com-
forts men have *at present*
in their possession, and at
command, what *excellen-
cies* or endowments, men
love to be alone to study,
and thinke of them, and
when they are sequestred
from the present use of
them, yet they will then
bee againe and againe re-
counting and casting of
them up, taking a survey
of their happines in them,
applauding their owne
hearts in their conditions.
And as rich men, that love
money, love to be looking
on

on it, and telling it over ; so do men to be summing up their comforts and priviledges they enjoy, which others want ; as, how rich they are , how great, how they excell others in parts and gifts , &c. Oh how much of that precious sand of our thoughts runne out this way ! Thus he in the Gospel, hee keepes an audit in his heart ; *Soule* (saith he) *thou hast goods laid up for many yeares.* So *Haman*, *Ester. 5. 11.* takes an Inventory of his honours and goods, he talkes of *all the glory of his riches, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him.* So *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.*

4.30. as it may seeme, hee was alone walking and talking to himselfe, like a foole, saying to himselfe ; *Is not this the great Babell which I have built by the might of my power, for the glory of my Majesty.*

And as thus upon their comforts, so also upon their excellencies, as their learning, wisdom, parts, &c. Men love to stand looking upon these in the glasse of their owne speculation, as faire faces love to looke often and long in Looking-glasses: which, as it ariseth from that selfe-flattery is in men; so also that they might keepe their happinesse

nesse still fresh and continued in their eye; which thoughts, when they raise not up the heart to thankfulness to God, and are not used to that end, but are bellows of pride; they are vaine and abominable in the eyes of God, as appears by Gods dealing with those fore-mentioned; for to the one hee sayes, *Thou foole, this night;* the other, *whilst the word was in his mouth,* (giving him no longer warning) hee strikes with madnesse and brutishnesse: and *Haman*, you know, was like a *Wall* that doth swell before it *breakes*, and falls to ruine and decay.

Secondly, *this speculative*

tive enjoying of pleasures, and acting over sinnes thus in fancy, doth appeare in regard of *things to come*; which when wee have in view, or any hopes of mens thoughts goe forth afore to meet them, with how much contentment doe mens thoughts entertaine their desires, with vaine promifings and expectations afore-hand of their pleasures, that are in view and in possibility to bee enjoyed. So they in *Esay* wind up their hearts to a higher pin of jollity in the midst of their cups, in that their hearts thought and promised them, *To morrow shall bee as to day, and much more* abund.

abundant, *Isay* 56. 12. So they, *Iames* 4. 13. they say with themselves, *Wee will goe to such a City, and continue there a yeare, and get gaine.* And the promise of this, and the thoughts of it afore-hand feeds them, and keepeſ up their hearts in comfort. When men rise in a morning, they begin to fore-thinke with much pleasure, what carnall pleasures they have the ad-vouſion and promise of that day or weeke, as to goe to ſuch company, and there bee merry; to goe ſuch a pleaſant journey, enjoy ſatiſfaction in ſuch a luſt, heare ſuch newes, &c. And thus as godly men

men live by faith in Gods promises, *Hab. 2. 4. Isay 38. 16. By these men live, and this is the spirit of my life, saith Hezekiah, even what God hath spoken, vers. 15.* So doe carnall men live much upon the promises of their owne hearts and thoughts afore-hand, (for to this head of vaine thoughts, these *vaine promises* are to be reduced, *Psalm. 49. 11. Their inward thought is, their houses shall continue for ever, and this thought pleaseth them:*) what pleasure almost is there, which a man makes much account of, but hee acts it first over in private in his owne thoughts: and thus doe
men

men foolishly take their owne words and promises, and so *befoole themselves in the end*, as *Jeremy speakes, Jerem. 17.* They take up before-hand in their thoughts upon trust, the pleasures they are to enjoy, even as spend-thrifts doe their rents, or Heires their renewes before they come of age to enjoy their lands, that when they come indeed to enjoy the pleasures they expected, either they prove but *dreames*, as *Isay 29. 6.* they finde their *soules empty*; or so much under their expectation, and so stale, as they have little in them, that there still
proves

proves more in the imagination than in the thing, which ariseth from the vastnesse and greedines of mens desires, as the cause hereof; for that makes them swallow up all at once. So *Hab.2. Enlarging his desires as Hell, hee heapes up all Nations, swallows them up in his thoughts.* So an ambitious Scholler doth all preferments that are in his view.

Thirdly, this *speculative wickednesse* is exercised in like maner towards *things past*, in recalling namely, and reviving in our thoughts the pleasure of sinfull actions passed; when the minde runnes
over

over the passages and circumstances of the same sins long since committed, with a new and fresh delight; when men raise up their dead actions long since buried, in the same likenesse they were transacted in, and parley with them, as the Witch & *Saul* did with Satan in *Samuels* likenesse. And whereas they should draw crosse lines over them, and blot them out through faith in Christs blood, they rather copy and write them over againe in their thoughts, with the same contentment. So an unclean person can study and view over every circumstance passed in such

E

an

an act, with such a person committed; so a vaine-glorious Scholler doth repeate in his thoughts an eminent performance of his, and all such passages therein as were most elegant. And thus men chew the cudd upon any speech of commendation uttered by others of them. And all this even as a good heart doth repeate good things heard or read, with the remembrance also of what quicknesse they had in such and such passages, and with what affections they were warmed, when they heard them; or as a godly man recalls with comfort the actions of a well-past life, as *Heze-
chiah*

chiah did, Lord I have walked before thee with a perfect heart; and thereby doe also stirre and provoke their hearts to the like temper againe: So on the contrary, doe wicked men use to recall, and revive the pleasingest sinfull passages in their lives, to suck a new sweetnesse out of them: Then which nothing argues more *hardnesse* and *wickednesse* of heart, or provokes God more. For,

First, it argues much *wickednesse* of heart, and such as when it is ordinary with the heart to doe thus, is not compatible with grace: for in the 6. of the *Romans*, ver. 12. the Apostle shewes that a good

E 2 heart

heart useth to reape no such fruit of sinfull actions past, *But what fruit had you of those things whereof yee are now ashamed?* The Saints reap and distill nothing out of all those flowers, but shame and sorrow, and sad sighs: when *Ephraim* remembered his sinne, he was *ashamed, & repented*; and canst thou in thy thoughts, reap a new harvest and crop of pleasure out of them, again and againe?

Secondly, it argues much hardnesse of heart; nothing being more opposite to the truth and practice of repentance, the foundation of which is to call to mind the sinne with shame

shame and sorrow, and to recall it with much more griefe, than ever there was pleasure in the committing of it: and whose property is to *hate* the *appearance* of it, and to enflame the heart with *zeale* and revenge against it.

And thereby it provoketh God exceedingly, our hearts are thereby embrued in a new guilt, wee thereby stand to, and make good our former act: even so, by remembering it with pleasure, wee provoke God to remember it with a new detestation of it, and so to send downe new plagues; who, if wee recall it with griefe, *would remember it no more:*

wee shew wee take delight
to rake in those wounds
wee have given Christ al-
ready ; to view *the sinnes of*
others with pleasure, *Rom.*
1. ult. is made more *than to*
commit them : Bnt much
more to view and revive
our owne with a fresh de-
light : and therefore know
that how-ever you may
take delight here to re-
peat to your selves your
old sins, yet that in Hell
nothing will gall you
more , than the remem-
brance of them ; every
circumstance in every sin
will then be as a dagger at
thy heart. This was the
rich mans taske and study
in Hell, to *remember the*
good things hee had recei-
ved,

ved, and his sins committed in the abuse of them.

And if godly men here be made to *possesse the sinnes of their youth with horreur*, as Iob, and to have them *ever afore them*, as David, how will wicked men bee continually affrighted with them in hell? whose punishment is in a great part set forth to us, by this *Psalme 50. 20. I will set them in order before thee.*

Fourthly, the fourth thing wherein this *speculative vanity* appeares, is in acting sinnes upon meere imaginary suppositions men faigne, and contrive to themselves, and make a supposition to themselves

in their own thoughts, first of what *they would bee*, and then what *they would doe*. Men create fooles paradises to themselves, and then walke up and downe in them; as, if they had money enough, what pleasures they would have; if they were in such places of preferment, how they would carry themselves. To allude to that *Abfolom* said, *2 Sam. 15. 4.* *Oh if I were a Iudge in the Land, I would doe this or that, &c.* doing this with a great deale of pleasure, almost as much as those that really enjoy them. This may well bee the meaning of that *Psalme 50. 18.* where of the hypocrite (who
out-

outwardly abstaines from grosse sins) 'tis said, that *hee consenteth with the thiefe, and partaketh with the adulterer*, namely, in his *heart and fancie*, supposing himself with them, and so desires to be doing what they doe. Thus take one who is naturally ambitious (whom both nature, parts and education have all made, but a *Bramble never to rule over the trees*, and hath fixt in a lower sphere, as incapable of rising higher or being greater, as the earth is of becoming a *Starre in Heaven*, yet) hee will take upon him in his owne heart, faining and suppo-

E 5 sing

posing himselfe to bee, and then act the part of a great man there, erect a throne, and sit downe in it; and thinkes with himselfe what hee would doe, if a King or a great Man, &c. So take a man that is uncleane, but now growne old, and a *dry tree*, and so cannot act his lust as formerly, yet his thoughts shall supply what is wanting in his strength or opportunity. And he makes his owne heart both Bawd, Brothel house, Whore, Whoremonger, and all: so a man that is naturally voluptuous, loves pleasures, but wants meanes to purchase them, yet his inclinations will please

please themselves with the thoughts of what mixture and composition of delights hee would have ; hee will set downe with himselfe his Bill of fare, how hee would have, if he might wish, his cup of pleasure mingled, what ingredients put into it. So a man that is revengefull, and yet wants a sting, yet he pleaseth himselfe with revengefull thoughts and wishes, and will be making invectives and railing dialogues against him, hee hates, when hee is not by. A man in love, in his fancy hee will court his Paramour though absent, he will by his imagination make her present, and so
frame

frame solemn set speeches to her.

In a word, let mens inclinations and dispositions bee of what kinde so ever, and let the impossibilities and improbabilities be never so great of being what they desire ; yet in their fancies and thoughts they will discover themselves what they would be. *Totumque quod esse desiderant sibi apud semetipsos cogitationibus depingunt*, men will bee drawing Maps of their desires, calculate their owne inclinations, cut out a condition of life which fills their hearts, and they please themselves withall: and there is no surer way to know a mans

mans naturall inclination,
than by this.

First, which yet first is
as great a folly as any o-
ther, imitating children
herein; for is it not chil-
dish to make clay pies, and
puppets? what else are
such fancies as these? and
to bee as children acting
the parts of Ladies and
Mistresses, and yet such
childishnesse is in mens
hearts.

2. And secondly, a
vanitie also, because a
man sets his heart on
what is not: the things
themselves are not, if a
man had them, *Prov. 23. 5.*
but to please themselves
with suppositions is much
worse.

Third-

Thirdly, this argues the greatest incontentation of minde that may bee, when men will in their owne thoughts put themselves into another condition than God ever ordained for them.



Use. I.

HAVING discovered the vanity of your thoughts and your estates thereby, bee humbled for them; This I ground upon, *Proverbs 30. 21.* where *Agur* teacheth us to humble our selves as well for thoughts as actions.

ons. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thy selfe, or if thou hast thought evill, lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Now as smiting upon the thigh is put for repentance and shame and sorrow in Ephraim, Ierem. 31. 19. so is laying the hand upon the mouth put for greater and deeper humiliation, as arguing full conviction of ones guilt, Rom. 3. 19. Every mouth must be stopped. Having nothing to say, not to plead and excuse, that thoughts are free, and it is impossible to bee rid of them, &c, but as Ezechiel, 16. 65. To remember and to bee confounded, and never to open thy mouth more! to bee vile, and
not

not to answer againe, as Iob 39.27,28. this is to lay thy hand on thy mouth, that is, to humble thy selfe.

And indeed there is much cause, for your thoughts they are the first begotten, and eldest sons of originall sin, and therefore *the strength of it*, as *Iacob* called *Reuben* the first-borne; yea also, and the *Parents* and begetters of all other finnes, their *brethren*; The first plotters and contrivers, and *Achitophels*, in all the treasons and rebellions of our hearts and lives; the bellows and incendiaries of all inordinate affections; the Panders to all our lusts, that *take thought* to pro-

provide for the fatisfying of them ; the disturbers in all good duties, that interrupt and spoile and fly-blow all our prayers, that they stinke in the nostrills of God.

And if their hainousnesse will nothing move you, consider their number, for they are continually thus: which makes our finnes to be in number more than the sands: the thoughts of *Solomons* heart were as the Sand, and so ours; not a minute, but as many thoughts passe from us, as in a minute sands doe in an Houre-glasse. So that suppose, that taken severally, they be the smallest and least of your finnes, yet

yet their *multitude* makes them more and heavier than all your other. Nothing smaller than a graine of *Sand*, but if there bee a heape of them, there is nothing *heavier*, *Iob 6.3.* *My griefe is heavier than the Sand.* Suppose they be in themselves, but as Farthing-tokens, in comparison of grosse defilements: yet because the Mint never lies still, sleeping nor waking, therefore they make up the greatest part of that treasure of wrath which wee are a laying up: and know that God will reckon every Farthing, and in thy punishment bate thee not one vaine thought. And that God looks up-
on

on our thoughts thus, see but the inditement he brings in against the old world; which stands still upon record, *Gen. 6.* when he pronounced that heavy judgement of destroying the old world, doth he alledge their murthers, adulteries, and grosse defilements chiefly as the cause? Their *thoughts* rather; which because so many, and so *continually evill*, provoked him more than all their other sinnes. Goe downe therefore into thy heart, and consider them well, to humble thee, to make thee vile, and if in one roome such a treasure of wickednesse bee found laid up, what in all those other

other *Chambers of the belly*, as *Solomon* calls them: consider them to humble thee, but not for all this their multitude to discourage thee. For God hath *more thoughts of mercy* in him, than thou hast had of rebellion, *Psal. 40.5.* *Thy thoughts to us-ward,* (speaking of thoughts of mercy) *are more than can be numbred.* Thou beganst but as yesterday to thinke thoughts of rebellion against him, but his thoughts of mercy have beene *from everlasting*, and reach to *everlasting*: and therefore in *Esay 55. vers. 7.* having made mention of *our thoughts*, let the *unrighteous man* forsake his thoughts, and

and hee will have mercy on him; because this objection of the multitude might come in to discourage men from hopes of mercy, therefore purposely hee addes, *hee will multiply to pardon*; and to assure us that hee hath thoughts of mercy to out-vie ours of sinne, hee addes, *for my thoughts exceed yours, as Heaven doth the earth.*

Vse 2.

LEt us make for ever conscience of them, so *Iob* did, *Iob* 31.1. I made a covenant with mine eyes, why should I thinke upon a Maide? *Solomon* gives in especiall charge, *above all keeping,*

*keeping, keepe thy heart,
Prov. 4. 23.*

First, thou art to keepe
the Lords day holy, thy
*selfe unspotted of the
World. To keepe thy brother,
to keepe all the Commande-
ments, but above all to keepe
thy heart, and in it, thy
thoughts; for this is the
Great Commandement, be-
cause it extends it selfe (as
the foundation) unto them
all: for as in the same Com-
mandement where mur-
ther is forbidden, a malici-
ous thought is also, and so
of the rest; So in keeping
the thoughts, thou virtually
keepest all the Comman-
dements: as originall sinne
is said to bee forbidden in
all the Commandements,
so*

so are thy thoughts taken order for in all.

Secondly, out of it are issues of life; thoughts and affections are the spring, speeches and actions the streame: as are our thoughts, so are our affections; for these are the bellows; so also our prayers, so all, for they are in the soule as the spirits in the body, they run through all, move all, act all.

Thirdly, if you looke to God, our thoughts are that spot of ground, which he proclaimes himselfe sole Lord of, and makes it one of his greatest titles, that hee *knows them*, and *judgeth them*. Kings attempt to rule your tongues,

tongues, to binde your hands, and rule your actions ; but God onely your thoughts. By them wee chiefly sanctifie him in our hearts, by them wee walke with God, and shall we not make conscience of them ?

Fourthly, if you looke to the worke and *power of grace*, wherein lies it, But in *bringing every thought into obedience* ? 2 Cor. 11. 4.

This is the glory of our religion above all other in the world : wherein lies the difficulty of it, the strictness of it, what makes it so hard a taske ? but the observing and keeping the thoughts in bounds: wherein lies the difference between sincere hearted Christians and

and others: but the keeping of our thoughts, without which all Religion is but *bodily exercise*. Papists may mumble over their prayers, hypocrits talke, but this is *godlinesse*.

Fiftly, if wee looke to things wee have a care of; if wee have a care of speeches, because Christ *hath said, wee shall answer for every idle word*; why not also for the same reason, should wee have a care of thoughts? which are the *words of the minde*, onely they want a shape, to bee audible to others, which the tongue gives them, for which you must answer as well as for words, *Heb. 4. 12. 1 Cor. 4. 5.* If you be
F carefull

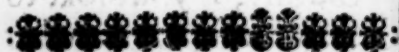
carefull what companions you have, and whom you lodge in your houses, and who lie in your bosomes, then much more of your thoughts, which lodge in your hearts, which are not yours, but Gods houses; built for himselfe, and for Christ and *his Word to dwell in*: seeing also the things you thinke of have the most neare intimate fellowship and converse with you. And therefore when you thinke of the Word, it is said to *talk with you, Pro. 6*. If you be carefull of what you eat, because such blood you have, &c. then be careful what you thinke, thoughts being *Pabulum anima*, as *Tully* calls them.

Thy

*Thy words did [I eate] saies
Jeremiah, speaking of me-
ditating on it.*

Sixthly, if you looke to
the issue of things: what
shall be the subject of that
great inquest at the Day of
Judgement? *the thoughts
and counsels, 1 Corin. 4.5.*
And after the Day of
Judgement, mens thoughts
shall prove their greatest
executioners: what are the
cords God lashes you
with to all eternity? your
owne thoughts; *thoughts
accusing*, whereby you stu-
dy over every sinne; and
every one will be as a dag-
ger, *Isay 33.18. the Hypo-
crites torment, is to medi-
tate terrors*, to study Gods
wrath, and the Saints bles-
F 2 sednesse,

sednesse, and their owne
finnes and misery.



*Remedies against vaine
Thoughts.*

THe first is to get the
heart furnished and en-
riched with a good stocke
of sanctified and heavenly
knowledge in spirituall and
heavenly truths: *For a
good man* (saith Christ)
*hath a good treasure in his
Heart, Matt. 13.35.* that
is, hee hath all graces,
so many precious truths
which are as Gold in the
Ore, which his thoughts,
as the Mint, doth coine and
beat

beat out, and which words bring forth. *A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things.* If therefore there bee not Mines of precious truths hid in the heart, no wonder if our thoughts coyne nothing but drosse, frothy vaine thoughts, for want of better materialls which should feed the Mint, are wanting. Therefore *Solomon* saith, *Wicked men forge, mint, or hammer wickednesse, Pro. 6. 14.* so *Iunius* reads it: or if men have store of naturall knowledge, and want spirituall usefull knowledge, to themselves; although in company with others, they may bring forth good

things in speeches, yet when alone, their thoughts runne not on them. For this, take a place of Scripture, *Deut. 6. 6, 7.* which shewes, that laying up the Word in the heart, and being much conversant in it, and getting knowledge out of it, is an effectuall meanes to keepe our thoughts well exercised when wee are alone: for the end why these words are commanded *to bee laid up in the heart, ver. 5, 6.* is, as to teach them to others, so, to take up our thoughts when we are most retired, and alone, and when a man can doe nothing, but barely exercise his minde, in thinking; for when a man is

is a *riding*, or *walking*, or
lying downe, and rising up,
 (which are often and usual-
 ly our most retired times
 for thoughts, & are whol-
 ly spent in them, for many
 ride alone, and lie alone,
 &c.) yet then, saith hee,
 thou shalt *talk of the Word*:
 which command he that is
 alone cannot do, therefore
 the *talking* there meant is
 not onely *λογος συζητητικος*
outward conference with o-
 thers (though intended) as
 to talke to thy bed-fellow
 of it, and to thy compani-
 on: but suppose thou hast
 none, then to *talke of it* to
 thy selfe, for thoughts are
λογος ενδιδωτικος, *talking of the*
minde; and so comparing
 Prov. 6. 22. with this place

F 4 (which

(which will fitly interpret it) it appeares ; for *Solomon* exhorting to the same duty of *Binding the Word to the heart*, with this motive, which is the fruit thereof, *That when thou awakest, it shall talke with thee*, that is, by thy thinking of it, it will talke with thee when thou and it art alone : So as thou shalt not need a better companion, it will bee putting in and suggesting something.

Secondly, endeavour to preserve and keep up lively, holy, and spirituall affections in thy heart, and suffer them not to coole ; *Fall not from thy first love*, nor feare, nor joy in God ; or if thou hast growne remisse,

misſe, endeavour to recover thoſe affections again. For ſuch as your affections are, ſuch neceſſarily muſt your thoughts be: and they encline the minde to think of ſuch or ſuch objects as will pleaſe them, rather than others; therefore ſayes *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 97. *How doe I love thy Law! it is my meditation day and night.* It was his love to it made him thinke of it ſo frequently. So *Mal.* 3. 16. *Thoſe that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name,* are joyned: For what we feare wee often thinke of, and alſo ſpeake of often; therefore it is added; *They ſpake of one to another; feare* made them *thinke much of*

his name, and thinking of it made them speake of it: such affection, such thoughts, and such speeches, as they both are. And indeede thoughts and affections are Sibi mutuo causa, the mutuall causes of each other: Whilest I mused, the fire burned, Psalm. 39. so that thoughts are the bellows that kindle and enflame affections: and then if they are enflamed, they cause thoughts to boile, therefore men newly converted to God, having new and strong affections, can with more pleasure thinke of God than any.

Thirdly, of all apprehensions else, get thy heart possessed with deep, strong
and

and powerfull apprehensions and impressions of Gods Holiness, Majestic, Omnipresence, and Omniscience. If any thoughts bee of power to settle, fixe, and draw in the minde of man, they are the *thoughts of him*. What is the reason that the Saints and Angels in Heaven have not a vaine thought to eternity, not a wry stroke, his presence fixeth them, their eie is never off him? Take a wanton garish loose spirit, let him be but in the presence of a Superiour whom hee feares and reverenceth, and it consolidates him. *Iob* made therefore conscience of his thoughts, that hee durst not looke awry,

Iob

Iob 31. 1, 2. because God sees it, saith hee. This drew in and fastned *Dauids* thoughts, *Psal.* 139. from the first to the twelfth, he manifests what continuall apprehension hee had of Gods Greatnesse, Majesty, and Omnipresence; and what effect had this? *When I awake I am even before thee, verse* 17. Looke what objects they are, have most strong and deepe impressions in the minde, of those when a man awaketh, hee thinkes of first. Now such strong impressions had *Dauids* thoughts of God, that still when hee awaked, hee was with him, and therefore wee finde it by experience to bee a meanes to avoid

avoid distractions in prayers, to enlarge a mans thoughts in his preparations before, or at the beginning with a consideration of Gods attributes and relations to us: and it will and doth make us serious.

Fourthly, especially do this when thou *awakest*, as *David* did there, *when I awake* I am still with thee: to prevent winde which ariseth from emptinesse, men use to take a good draught in the morning, which the stomacke feeds; so to prevent those vaine, windy, frothy thoughts the heart naturally ingenders, and which arise from emptinesse; first fill thy heart with the thoughts of God;

Goe

Goe downe into his Wine-celler: observe it when you will, when you first open your eyes, there stand many suitors attending on you, to speake with your thoughts, even as Clients at Lawyers doores, many vanities and businesses; but speake thou with God first, hee will say something to thy heart, will settle it for all day: and this doe before the croud of businesses come in upon thee. Of some Heathens it is said that they worship *that* as their *God*, for all day, which they first see in the morning; so it is with the idols of mens hearts.

Fiftly, have a watchfull eye, and observe thy heart
all

all day, though they croud in, yet observe them, let them know that they passe not unseene; if a man would pray aright, he must watch also, who comes in, and who goes out: where strict watch and ward is kept, and Magistrates observant, the Marshall and Constable diligent to examine vagrant persons, you shall have few there; that such swarmes of vagrant thoughts make their rendezvous, and passe, is because there is not strict watch kept.

This is in a manner all thou canst doe, for they will passe however, but yet complaine thou of them, whip them, and give them

them their passe.

Sixtly, please not thy fancy too much with vanities and curious sights, this engenders vaine thoughts; therefore *Iob* sayes, *Chap. 31. vers. 1. That hee made a covenant with his eyes, lest he should thinke of a Maide, Prov. 4. 25. Let thine eyes looke right on.*

Seventhly, bee diligent in thy calling, and *what thine hand findes to doe, doe it with all thy might*, as it is, *Ecclesiastes 9. 10.* that is, putting to all the intention and strength of the minde that may bee in it. Let all the streame runne to turne about thy Mill; the keeping thy thoughts to that channell, keeps them from
over-

overflowing into vanity
and folly, 2 *Thes.* 3. 11.
Those that labour not are bus-
sie bodies. And 1 *Tim.* 5. 13.
Idle, wandering, *μειστροι*, they
are not onely called *ἀργοι*,
Idle only, because not busie
about what they should,
but *μειστροι*, as intent on
things they should not;
they goe from house to
house: so their bodies do,
because their mindes doe
wander, having no center.
When *David* walked a-
lone, what extravagancy
did his spirit run into? let
the ground lye fallow,
and what weeds will there
soone grow in it? God
hath appointed us our cal-
lings to entertaine our
thoughts, and to finde
them

them worke, and to hold
 them doing in the *interims*,
 between the duties of his
 worship, because the spi-
 rit and thoughts of men
 are restlesse, and will bee
 busied some way; as ther-
 fore Kings keep those men
 that have active spirits in
 continual imployment, lest
 their heads should be wor-
 king and plotting amisse:
 so did God appoint even in
 Paradise the active spirit
 of man, a calling to keepe
 him doing. God hereby
 hedgeth in mans thoughts,
 and sets them to goe in a
 narrow lane, knowing that
 if they are unconfined and
 left at liberty, they would
 like wilde *Asses snuffe up*
the winds, as *Jeremy* speaks,
Jeremy

Jeremy 2. 24. onely take
 heed of encumbring thy
 minde with too much bu-
 sinesse, more than thou
 canst graspe. It made *Mar-*
tha forget that *one thing*
necessary, being cumbred
 with many things, *Luke 10.*
4. this breeds care *υπερω*,
 which distracts the minde,
 (so the word signifies *υπερ*
επιμελεια, as *dividing it*, and
 so causeth wandering
 thoughts nothing more,
 so that the minde is not it
 selfe. For this weakens it,
 enervates it, and this be-
 ing vanlty, *Exod. 18. 18.*
 said *Iethro* to *Moses*, when
 encombred with business,
Thou wilt fade away as a
leafe, out of which the
 moisture is dryed up, even
 that

that ioyce, which should be left for good | duties. will be exhausted: as dreames come through multitude of businesse, *Eccles. 5. 3.* so do a multitude of thoughts from a cumber of business.

Eightly, in thy calling, and all thy wayes, for the successe and thy wayes therein, *Commit thy wayes to God, Prov. 16. 3. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established, or ordered:* that is, kept from that confusion and disorder, and those swarms of cares, which others are annoyed with: and thereby thy aimes may bee as well accomplished: a few thoughts of faith would save us many thoughts of cares

cares and feares, in the busi-
nesses wee goe about,
which prove therefore
vaine, because they for-
ward not at all the busi-
nesse wee intend. When
such waves trosse the heart
and turmoile it, and the
windes of passions are up,
if a few thoughts of
faith come into the
heart, they calm
all presently.

FINIS.



*Perlegi hunc tractatum,
cui titulus est (The vanity
of thoughts) in quo nihil
reperio , quo minus impri-
matur.*

*Rever. in Ch. Patri
& D^{no} D. Ar.Cant.
Sac. Dom.*

*Ex Ed. Lamb
Iul.1. 1637.*

*IOH. OLIVER.
The godly grne to come to
god*